[Village of Mġarr]

By the mid-Thirties Mġarr had become independent of Mosta as a Police area and had been connected to the Telephone network[15]. Other amenities to reach the village about this time included a number of levelled roads, although asphalting did not appear until after the 1939-45 War. During the War years most construction activity was halted. Some 700 refugees from the blitzed harbour areas were billeted in the village; thirty shelters were dug, and about 600 bombs fell in the vicinity of the village destroying two houses and killing three people (R/291). United States' forces camped near Mġarr prior to the Sicily invasion: an Italian aircraft crashed not far away. Mġarr heard about the war and experienced as much of it at first hand as most other rural parts of the Islands lying well away from the Dockyard, air bases and other strategic targets. Food rationing and Government control of production put the farmers of Mġarr in as strong a position as elsewhere but at the worst period of the siege even they were reduced to chewing carob beans[12].

By the advent of the present decade Mġarr had acquired the normal characteristics of community life of village Malta, with Church, school, police station, dispensary and doctor, telephones, and roads. The built-up area has since expanded rapidly. In this present decade, too, the village has gone on to 'catch-up' with older settlements to the extent of establishing the four branches of the Catholic Action movement (Appendix 4). A most modern and well-appointed 'oratory' has for five years been the focal point of Catholic teaching and social work in the Parish. Its theatre holds 700 and shows films on Sundays and special occasions. More recently a commercial cinema has opened in the village but, one understands, it cannot detract from the popularity of the oratory film show.

Within the past few years, shops have appeared in the village which is now independent in this respect for food and general items. Travelling vans, a prominent feature of the countryside, further swell the range of goods available on the spot and are joined in this door to door service by the weekly paraffin (petrolju) vehicle. For other items Mġarr housewives still make the journey to Mosta or Valletta on the buses which operate every few hours; a generation ago their mothers carried bread on their backs each week from Mosta, the parent village.

On account of its recent development, Mġarr lacks certain features found in the larger and much older settlements. The Catholic Action is the only Lay Movement in the village - though it is notably active there, and of the Confraternities which are numerous in the older settlements Mġarr has only three (Appendix 4).

*159 443 484 521 Shopping is done in the local village but Nardu makes the journey to Valletta for the 'Fuq il-Monti' Sunday market occasionally, though with the intention of gossipping rather than making purchases.

CASE III : Summary

(A goats' milk producer.)

*159 423 **A. Land.**

30 tmien in Naxxar-Gharghur Hills area.
14 Field plots in two main groups;
All on soils of tad-Dawl and l-Iklin Complexes.
Of this - 5½ tmien freehold,
- 24½ tmien leased from 6 landlords.
Rents range between 10/- and £1 per tomna.

*159 241 311 **B. Utilisation.**

Almost entirely fodder production e.g. February 195
3 plots under widna.
1 plot under barley - pulled green.
3 half plots under wheat.
2 half plots under sulla.
1 plot used for goat grazing - fallow.
1 plot under foħfa (bitter vetch).
1 enclosure under prickly pear.
3 plots under vetches.
Remainder subdivided and carrying potatoes, broad beans and a few vegetables.
Only regular cash crop - winter potatoes.

[434]

*159 231 **C. Livestock.**

During 1957/1958 goat numbers ranged from 35 to 50 and milkers from 27 to 40.
5 sheep kept for wool and sheeps milk for cheese-making.
1 mule - imported from Tunis.

*159 [423] [454] [412] [407] **D. Capital.**

- Land held in freehold valued at £400 in early 50's
- Freehold village house.
- According to his own statement liquid reserves of £200.
- Equipment - hand tools, local wooden plows, etc. No machinery but plans to buy rotary cultivator.

*159 464 **E. Labour.**

- Wife spends c.30% of her time on the land, although childrens ages range from 3-8.
- Communal help for threshing.
- Hires labour for barley and sulla cutting. During 1957 c.18 man days at cost of c.£15.

[427]

- Every 4th year deep plowing (by contract) of about half the fields. Cost £1 to 15/- a tomna.
- Each year has some land tilled by rotary cultivator. Cost 12/- a tomna.

*159 433 **F. Production and Sales.**

- Goats milk sales range from February minimum of c.45 lbs. per day to May-August maximum of c.70 lbs. per day.
- Winter potatoes as cash crop vary considerably in yield and in selling price.
- Occasional sales of small quantities wheat and wool
- Produce consumed by family valued at c.£1 per week.

*159 241 **G. Husbandry.**

(1) Land - All dung used on fields - usually before potato setting.
- 7-8 bags of sulphate of ammonia applied annual
- The concentration on leguminous fodders prove the employment of the normal four-year rotat

6:Beeley K-S (1957-1958) 1959 EZ6 Malta EZ6

000 can command.

226 There has, however, been material help to fishing in the
463 form of financial assistance[21] and the introduction of a
554 Fishing Equipment Supply Service (R/177 - 1957, Section F,
178 p.1), but the essence of the problem is, as in agriculture, that there is a retreat from fishing by the younger generation.

226 Marsaxlokk is the biggest fishing centre in the Islands
103 while, in Malta itself, Żurrieq - though not a port - comes
621 second by number of resident fishermen. In Gozo most fish-
361 men live in Victoria and Xewkija, both inland settlements away from the fishing harbours of Marsalforn, Mgarr and Xlendi. Socially this residential distribution is important since only in Marsaxlokk is there a sufficient resident fishing population for one to talk of a 'fishing community'.

361 Marsaxlokk achieved parochial status in 1897 but the
226 village is still without many 'modern' attributes such as cinema, resident doctor, barber and certain shopping facilities for which the fisherman goes to Żejtun. His interest is
[484] primarily the sea and many fishermen visit the 'town' only
[443] for the fish market. In Marsaxlokk itself the fishermen
[512] gather for Church and gossip on Sunday mornings; the rest of their weekly schedule is governed by the weather and the season.

226 As a class the fishermen and their families are economi-
463 cally lower than the farmers. In February, 1958, about
554 10.4% of the estimated 840 fishermen were poor enough to
55 qualify for C.A.R.E. relief (v. Section 3). At the same
511 time only 9% of farmers were entitled to supplies on the same
162 basis, and the average for the total population was lower still at 8.2%.

226 The fisherman is regarded, even by the farmer, as low on
463 the social scale. This, together with the generally
554 depressed standard of living of the fishing community despite
178 the present official financial assistance, is producing exactly the same position as in agriculture. The younger generation is not prepared to accept the industry as it is nor the way of life based on it.

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

This feast is also celebrated with great pomp at the Cathedral Church of città Vittoria, Gozo, and for this reason our sister Island is, on the occasion, an attraction for the Maltese people. In fact, several steamers and launches decorated with coloured flags, are employed on the eve of the festival, and sometimes for some days before, transporting the vast concourse of people who, influenced either by a spirit of devotion or a desire to enjoy a pleasant trip, a healthy change, and a little fresh air, embrace the opportunity of paying a visit to the famed Island of Calypso to behold the festivities which take place there at the festival of "Santa Maria."

On the evening of the 14th the illuminations and fireworks are very splendid; the religious ceremonies, on that,

7: Busuttil I, Y-4, 5 (no date) 1894
EZ6 Malta EZ6

796 and the following day, are conducted with the usual solemnity and fervour. 541 There are also several races of quadrupeds in the afternoon of the day of the festival, similar to those which are held in Malta on the feast of S. S. Peter and Paul (L'Imnaria). These races bring the amusements to a close.

796 484 788 Worth mentioning is the custom which prevails amongst some of our country people on the 14th of August, the eve of the feast of "Santa Maria."

Groups of country men and country women, actuated purely by religious motives and a desire to honour the Great Mother of God, start for a pilgrimage of more than 8 hours walk on the morning of that summer day, heedless of the excessive heat of the scorching sun, to visit the churches at the 7 above mentioned villages dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

9: Luke G-5 (ca. 1920-ca. 1960) 1960
EZ6 Malta EZ6
Goz

Corniche from heights as inaccessible as nature and man's ingenuity could make them. When the marauders from North Africa ceased to be a menace, the citadel was partly evacuated for the lower town, but happily was never abandoned completely. Even now it contains the cathedral of the diocese and the Law Court and Public Registry, formerly the residence of the Governors of Gozo; and, although many of its ancient houses are in ruins, a few are still inhabited.

One interesting little lane with façades of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was restored by the Government before the outbreak of the Second World War, as has been the handsome Renaissance building facing the entrance to the citadel latterly known as the Bondi Palace, as related at the end of Chapter XIII. One of the houses in the lane at one time belonged, as an inscription testifies, to the soldier Bernard, "*miles Bernardus*," who was killed at the capture of the citadel by the Turks under Sinan Pasha in 1551. When he saw that the fortress could hold out no longer this dauntless man took the lives of his wife and two daughters with his own hand to save them from being sold into captivity, and then fell, fighting to the end. The walls and fortifications of the citadel are happily well preserved.

Gozo was Ogygia or Gaulos to the Greeks, *gaulos* (γαῦλος) being the word the Greeks had for the round merchant-boats of their rivals, the Phœnicians. From Gaulos it became Gaulum to the Romans, then appears on Idrisi's map of 1154 as Ghudash, and in modern Maltese is known as Ghawdex (pronounced Audesh), its Bishop signing as *Episcopus Gaudisiensis*. The shortest ferry-crossing between the two islands is only four miles, yet many Gozitans have never been to Malta while the overwhelming majority of Maltese have never been to Gozo.

The Gozitans are a frugal, thrifty, reserved, at times somewhat (yet not unpleasantly) dour people, who are regarded in Malta in much the same way as the Scots are